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THE PULP COLLECTOR

VOL. 1 #1

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SPRING 1985

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Norman A. Saunders

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FROM THE EDITOR

Before there was a Clark Kent there was a Clark Savage Jr. Before there was a Batman, there was a Shadow. Before there was Peter Parker, the Spider-Man, there was a Richard Wentworth aka the Spider. Before Playboy, there was a Saucy Movie Tales, before Penthouse, there was a Spicy Love Stories, and even before there was a Travis McGee, there was a Sam Spade.

Pulps, an historical beginning for heroes? Not really, but I can truthfully say that today's heroes owe a great deal of debt to yesterdays pulps. Superman was partly patterned after Doc Savage, in fact it has been pointed out that the slogan of the Man of Steel, was first attributed to an ad for Doc Savage, and not Superman. As well as Bruce Wayne, the Batman was patterned after Lemont Cranaton and the Shadow. Heroes existed before the Pulps, but did they ever fill as great a need as the pulp heroes did? That might be a question for the pulp scholars that grace this first issue. But this is not only a magazine for pulp heroes, but also for Western characters, weird menace monsters that crave half dressed women, bug eyed monsters of science fiction, hard-boiled detectives, romantic lovers in far away places, and for you, the collector of pulps.

The Pulp Collector was created out of a need to know and a sense of awe. What makes the pulp collector click, what makes the pulp collector's heart beat faster. Is it the story about Flesh Eaters of the Damned, or is it the Howitt cover. Is

it the blazing guns and the chilling laughter of the Shadow, or could it be the Rozen cover. How about nostalgia, the yearning for long ago days of rushing into the local news dealer or candy shop to peruse the magazine section for the latest issue of Wild West Weekly. It could be all three, all I know is that I always loved the pulps. My biggest regret is that I didn't have the opportunity to look over hundreds of titles, brand new and right off the press.

I hope this like other pulp fanzines fits the bill. I mean this issue will have to meet the standards that others have set. I would like to say that I do not want anyone thinking that I am trying to usurp the pulp fanzine market. I really feel that there is room for more and I hope that I do not draw customers away from such fine fanzines as Echoes published by Tom Johnson or the Doc Savage/Shadow Quest by Bill Laidlaw. I would rather be a part than a competitor to any fanzine about pulps.

So share with us this first issue of The Pulp Collector, and maybe you will learn something new, or maybe you will just have your memory jogged concerning your favorite pulp. Either way, we want to know your feelings. Please send me your thoughts, whether or not they are good or (gulp) bad, because we need to know what you like and what you want.

John P. Gunnison
Editor, Publisher

LETTERS PAGE

Dear John,

Your ad caught my eye and I cannot tell you how delighted I am that another pulpzine is to appear--may it have a long and healthy life.

The lineup of featured authors and regular departments makes the zine sound like a real dream. I am particularly pleased that you not only plan to have illustrations and plenty of cover reprints but also departments devoted to the best and the worst pulpcovers of all time. This is a subject dear to my heart, as, for the past eight years, I have been photo'ing every pulp cover I could, as well as whatever b/w interior illustrations I could get permission to photo. At the moment I have over thirty albums of color negatives, slides, prints, and enlargements, plus a couple of cartoons of b/w stuff.

There were many beautiful pulp covers. Even though the subject matter was so narrowly circumscribed by the dictates of crass commercialism, the artist often managed to surpass these limitations and produce works of sheer beauty.

Just last summer at PULPCON I photo'd one such cover: that of the August, 1938, issue of CLUES DETECTIVE STORIES. Somehow this particular pulp had managed to survive forty-six years in nearly pristine condition. It still looked like it just came hot off the Street and Smith presses. The colors were vibrant, though subdued, and the composition was superbly balanced so that each element blended into the whole and yet drew your eye from element to another in a never-ending cycle. To me, such a cover is one representative of the best in pulp art.

It is too bad that the costs of full-color reproduction are so high as to

render it economically unfeasible for publishers to produce volumes devoted to reprinting some of the tens of thousands of covers that appeared on the pulps.

While black and white reproductions show the format and content, they cannot have the impact or the allure that the full-color covers possessed. At best, the b/w repros are but the ghosts of the originals and as ghosts, are often misinterpreted by the eye and the mind. In many instances it is almost impossible to get even a decently clear b/w repro of the original. Thus, while b/w repros are to some extent better than nothing, they are but pale substitutes for the full-color originals.

Many times, in trying to get a b/w reproduction of a color cover to use in a pulpzine, I have had to resort to all manner of time-consuming (and oftentimes inordinately expensive) tricks and techniques. Even then, on occasion, I have been unable to get any sort of satisfactory picture. The eye/mind, the camera/film, and the printing process do not always come together successfully in these attempts. On rare occasions they seem to be mutually antagonistic.

Fortunately for those of us pulpologists interested in such aesthetics, most covers seem to cooperate to some degree in the attempt to reproduce them in black and white and we are able to get some impression of the original picture. The impact is lessened and the glamor is almost entirely gone, but some of the power of the artist is still transmitted. And this but whets instead of assuages our pulp hunger and we try to visualize the full-color original. Of course, most of us (who, like me, lack any artistic training or talent) cannot do this. It is for occasions like these that color photos are indispensable. They allow the viewer to slake his thirst--over and over and over again, for they do

not wear out, nor are they consumed by viewing even inordinately.

At first, ordinary 3x5 photos suffice, but then, like any other addict, we need larger and larger doses. For a while 5x7's pacify, but then the craving outstrips these and 8x10's become necessary. This is where I am at present, but--I have already gotten several 11x14's and even one 16x20. This last is carrying 35mm photography to its outermost limits, for it has four times the area of one pulp cover. However, it does make a fine wall-hanging for the hall that leads to my study. (I cannot put it in the study as there is no wall space for it--bookshelves, you know.)

In any event, I am glad to see that you plan to have lots of cover reprints. They are a definite asset, especially if they are coordinated with the articles. An even greater contribution to the tone of an article can be secured by printing some of the original b/w illus that accompanied a particular story or series. There were many outstanding illustrators who worked for the pulps, especially in the thirties. Since these illus were originally printed in b/w, they pose little problem in reprinting.

Again, a long and healthy life to THE PULP COLLECTOR.

Joe Lewandowski
San Juan Capistrano
California

"Thanks for the vote of confidence and your comments Joe. I can understand Joe's problems in his photographing the covers, I have reproduced many different covers and if there is enough interest I could write an article for those who would like more information on how to get the best results in color reproductions."

Hi,

I saw your ad and it looks like something I'd be interested in. I get Echoes and the Savage Society of Bronze. So if yours is 1/2 as good (and it sounds like it will be great) it will be money well spent.

Jay Pickens
Bellevue
Wisconsin

"Thank you Jay, as well as all of you that sent in your money for this magazine. Without you there is no reason for doing this."

Dear Mr. Gunnison,

Your advertisement attracted my attention. It appears that you are assembling an excellent magazine with THE PULP COLLECTOR. Your contributors are all established authorities in the pulp field. I would certainly like to sample the magazine.

Kevin Cook
Lynbrook
New York

"Kevin, I am sure that the authors of all of the articles appreciate your words. Since all of them take time out of their busy schedules to write articles without asking for anything in return."

Dear John,

Count me in for a year's subscription to THE PULP COLLECTOR. For me there can't be enough fanzines in this collecting area. Best wishes and long life.

Victor A. Berch
Marlboro
Massachusetts

"Victor I can truthfully say I share the same sentiments, and I hope that I will be able to publish this for a long, long time."

THE SECOND TIME AROUND

by

Robert Sampson

5 Detective Novels, that handsome magazine, was born in 1949 amid aftershock and stress. Not many months before, Street & Smith had terminated its pulp magazine line and that abrupt defection froze professional hearts, and sent apprehension chittering along professional nerves.

It was a year of unease. The whole pulp magazine business was unsettled. The Second World War was over, but its malign effects lingered like a spider bite. As production

costs increased. As distribution problems multiplied. As sales lurched and faltered and slowly slowly contracted -- or sometimes not so slowly. As the first unclear signs appeared of that wave of extinction which, in 1953, would rise to black climax.

Or so we know now. In 1949, the future seemed less bleak, although, God knows, times were competitive and tough.

Such times had been set more than once in the pulp business. To survive, you cut costs, improved the product, experimented timidly, held on, waiting for the advertiser and



the reader. In 1920 and 1932, and 1936, those dreadful years, readers and advertiser alike had fallen away. But they had always returned. Always.

And so, in preparation for that happy return, the magazines of 1949 burnished their format and prepared to meet prosperity more than half way. As it turned out, prosperity had other ideas. But at least the magazines tried.

5 Detective Novels was a child of the period. It was intended to produce revenue at minimum cost by reprinting older fiction from the Standard Magazine files. That included fiction originally published in Thrilling Detective, Popular Detective, and Thrilling Mystery, for the most part, although other magazines crept in later. Whether authors received a pittance or merely a warm glow at seeing their names in print is not known. We may suspect the worst. For, in those dark days, some publishers were known to purchase all rights and a sale was forever. (The subject of unreimbursed reprints generated much flame within professional writers' groups of the late 1930's.)

Although the fiction was reprint, the cover was fresh, modern, handsome. The most usual cover assembled such standard ingredients as menace, gun, and girl -- this last ingredient being shown with exquisite mouth and a frontal development that should have made walking impossible.

At least one cover, Winter 1953, seems cribbed from a moving picture publicity photograph -- "A Bad Day At Black Rock," according to one authority. Certainly the face of Spencer Tracy is faintly recognizable. Other covers from that period also suggest an origin among publicity stills.

The covers of 1952-1953 are rather darker than the covers of 1950-1951. The invariable subject, the girl in peril, floats against a background of shadows. Her limbs are pale, her face distorted by fear.

She peers toward some dreadful event occurring past the other side of the cover--out where the reader stands peering in.

On earlier covers, backgrounds are lighter, colors richer, and the girls are not always helpless victims. In all cases, they are refreshingly female. In almost all cases, they wear red dresses.

The initial issues of 5 Detective Novels offered 146 pages -- 148 pages, if you included both sides of the front cover, as did the formal page count. For .25 cents, you received five longish short stories, the "novels" of the magazine's title. Each ran about 20 pages. Stirred in among these were two, sometimes three, honest-to-God short stories.

This dose of fiction did not quite use all the available space. So the blank areas were filled by other means, rather as an unprincipled restauranteur will artistically pad a plate with lettuce to conceal the modest dimensions of the meat.

Padding in the magazine consisted of a pair of articles, themselves brief enough, and a mass of filler material, grandly described as "Features." This stuff took various forms: a verse, a cartoon, or diminutive paragraphs offering a joke, an anecdote, or a small wad of facts. It was the trivia of yesterday.

Each issue also offered an extended department in which the editor waxed lyrical about the contents of the next issue. Plot summaries of coming attractions, often in great detail, sopped up the remaining blank space. Infrequently, letters from readers appeared.

As in any well-organized magazine, the ads paid the freight. Full-page ads gripped most cover space and a few interior pages. In the back of the book, ads were much smaller, each about 1 x 2-3/4 inch. They marched in columns down the page, shouting at you: Become a Famous Artist, stop gas pains with garlic tablets, mount birds at home,

metalize baby shoes, stop TOBACCO use, and write for the free catalog illustrating television set with Giant 16" pictures.

This, in general terms, the physical plant of 5 Detective Novels, "A Thrilling Publication," issued by Standard Magazines, Inc. N.L. Pines, President.

Eighteen quarterly issues were published from late 1949 to late 1953. (The final issue, dated Winter 1954, was, as usual, dated ahead.) The run contained six volumes of three issues each, for whatever delight you may find in that fact.

Behind these passionless statistics is another story. That tells how the magazine began as a superior reprint, its future luminous and its heart quick. And how the future became something else altogether, something grayer and thinner, so that the magazine changed in little ways no one would have anticipated at the start. The years slipped away, and the magazine began turning this way and that, seeking the way back to that first promise.

But it was not a time for finding the way back.

This search gives a faint, sad overtone to later issues of the magazine. But an overtone only. We ought not to read tragedy into what, in truth, were routine editorial adjustments. 5 Detective Novels was a

sound professional magazine attempting to make some sort of profit by recycling the past. As all magazines, it adjusted to the problems of the moment.

It shows what professional skill and workmanship could do in the early 1950s, and its changes are almost as interesting as the prose.

The magazine began ambitiously. The first issue, dated November 1949, was planned for every-other-month publication. It was in the fine old tradition--a thick-bodied pulp measuring about 7x9-3/4. The editorship was credited to

Harvey Burns, apparently a house name.

An admirable selection of mystery-action fiction was offered: "The Murder Bridge" (reprinted from 1934) by George Harmon Coxe; "Too Tough To Die" (from 1935 and featuring the hardboiled detective, Red Lacey) by



George Bruce; "Murder In Mexico" (1938) by Steve Fisher; "The Hooded Killer" (1934) by Paul Ernst, the story opening with dire thunders:

Nicholas James shuddered with dread premonition as he fitted the key into the lock of his door. Something deadly seemed to be hovering over his house.

And, finally, Richard Sale's "Death On an Ocean Liner" (1940), tough, fast, slick.

It is a curious prose mixture. Hooded Killers had been passe for nearly a decade, and tough detectives, Red Lacey not notwithstanding, had quietly changed their shirts and drinking habits. Sale's galloping contemporary fiction, stressing character, mixes oddly with the other novelettes of brutal action.

But if the fiction appealed to incompatible tastes, the writers appealed to everybody. They were proven performers, each with his cadre of admirers. Most would appear again. Some, like Bruce's Lacey, would appear repeatedly.

In addition to the five novels, that first issue contained an article by Ray Cummings ("A Portrait of Alexander Hamilton") and a thin little true fact article by S.M. Ritter. The editor's department, "On The Docket," was an extended puff for the next issue. A little space was squandered to welcome readers and to state, in breathless self-admiration, the wonder of the new magazine:

If the year 1949 is remembered for any particularly out-standing event in the publishing field it will be the advent of the remarkable new magazine entitled FIVE DETECTIVE NOVELS. You are now holding in your hands a copy of the inaugural issue which contains five dramatic, thrill-packed novels by the world's top-ranking mystery writers all for the amazing low price of .25 cents. Just think of it!...

This--our first number--will

probably become a collector's item, so we advise you to hold onto it. Don't give it away. If your friends want to read it, lend it to them but be sure to get it back.

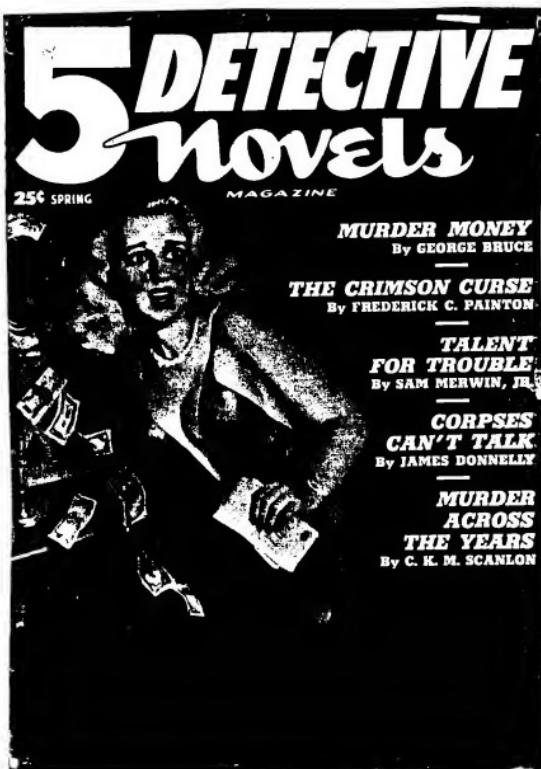
This euphoric tone was carried over to the second issue (Winter 1950), the editor remarking:

Let's begin by expressing our thanks to you hundreds of thousands of readers who, with overwhelming response, welcomed our first issue...

It was almost certainly to the bitter disappointment of those hundreds of thousands of readers that the second issue had quietly become a quarterly. The story selection remained interesting. Another Red Lacey adventure from 1936 ("The Claim of the Fleshless Corpse") by George Bruce, together with stories by Frederick C. Paiton, Norman Daniels, and Westmoreland Gray. A welcome addition was a G.T. Fleming-Roberts novelette about George Chance, the Ghost Detective--one of the superior magician-detective of the pulps. The story, "The Case of the Astral Assassin," had been originally published in the November 1942 Thrilling Mystery, and was the first of four Ghost adventures to be reprinted.

(Chance had originally appeared in seven issues of his own magazine, The Ghost and The Green Ghost Detective, during 1940-1941. After the magazine terminated with the Summer 1941 issue, Chance moved to a 6-novelette series in 1942-1943 Thrilling Mystery. The novelettes are probably better than the novels, although any Ghost Detective adventure is fine reading.)

While Chance did not appear in the Spring 1950 issue of 5 Detective Novels, Red Lacey did: "Murder Money" (1935). Sam Herwin, Jr., was represented by a smooth, non-stop action piece, "Talent for Trouble" (1941), that had a New York City jazz background. And one of the short



stories was by Arthur J. Burks, a neat little piece of jungle violence, "Kill-Dog Kill," that does not seem to be a reprint.

The last of the large-sized issues of 5 Detective Novels was dated Winter 1951. It was a particularly fine issue. It contained another Ghost novelette ("The Case of the Clumsy Cat" from the March 1943 Thrilling Mystery). There were also three hardboiled novelettes by H.H. Stinson, W.T. Ballard, and Nelson S. Bond--this last being a Red Drake case, "Murder for a Million," originally published in the Winter 1941

Exciting Detective. Also included was Fredric Brown's "The Jabberwocky Murders" (Thrilling Mystery, Summer 1944), the first of five Brown stories reprinted.

Two short stories were also used, one of them being Seabury Quinn's "Dead Man's Shoes," which is not identified as a reprint.

The "On the Docket" department rather casually summarizes what is to come in the next issue. Equal space is devoted to a puff for Giant Detective and Popular Detective; all the stories described sound exactly alike.

One thing not mentioned in "On the Docket" is that the magazine is about to drop fourteen pages and 5/8s of an inch height. Such distressing information might frighten the reader, a notoriously spooky quarry. As a result, not even a whisper of change leaks out.

However, change comes. The Spring 1951 issue is decidedly smaller, decidedly thinner. By some arcane magic, there seems to be the same amount of fiction.

The other visible change is that "On the Docket" was replaced by "The Lowdown." This temporarily contracted to a single page, most of which was spent discussing current slang.

The novels offered include "The Case of the Broken Broom," the last Ghost reprint (from the Fall 1943 Thrilling Mystery). Also "Murder Music" by Robert Wallace--which sounds as if it should be a Phantom Detective novel but isn't--that was originally published in the October 1938 Popular Detective; "Must This Man Burn?" by Frederick C. Panton (August 1939 Thrilling Detective). And two other novelettes by Westmoreland Gray and John Hawkins.

For those who keep track of such things, it may be noted that, for this issue only, the Volume number is given as "XX," rather than "3."

From this point on, the magazine glides smoothly out, issue after issue. It has reached its height of excellence and continues to hold fast. Major features include novelettes by such highly popular writers as G.T. Fleming-Roberta (not about the Ghoul), W.T. Ballard, Talmaege Powell, Frederic Brown.

And now, softly, softly, like mice dancing in the night, the editorial policy is modified. Standard Magazines are no longer the only source for the fiction.

Two stories are reprinted from The American Magazine, a major slick publication, and four stories are drawn from Black Mask. Original novelettes begin to appear and more first-run short stories. These un-

expected changes will continue for about a year.

To the Fall 1951 issue is added a new department, "Cryptogram Corner." This continued for five issues through Fall 1952, bringing satisfaction to those eager for mental anguish. During the same period, the number of "Features" ballooned madly, eight, ten, eleven items. All were cited on the Table of Contents, so that a cursory glance suggested the magazine contained an immense amount of reading material.

These changes are more or less correlated with the editorship of David X. Manners. His name is cited as editor in the Fall 1951 issue. His selections are increasingly modern, increasingly smooth, with characterization, some psychological insight, and an occasional whiff of the supernatural. He reprints Paul Chadwick's "Angels Die Hard" (Winter 1952), and three by Frederic Brown: "Compliments of a Fiend" (Winter 1952), "The Ghost Breakers" (Summer 1952), and "The Cat from Siam" (Spring 1953).

These stories are interspersed by the Black Mask reprints, the first by Dale Clark ("This Will Slay You," 1941) in the Summer 1952 issue. It was followed by Frederick C. Davis' "This Way To the Morgue" (1938) and Stewart Sterling's "Kindly Omit Flowers" (1942). (Both appeared in the Fall 1952 issue of 5 Detective Novels.)

After little more than a year, Manners was replaced as editor by Morris Ogden Jones, whose name first appears in the Winter 1953 issue. With the coming of Jones, a number of editorial readjustments take place. Reprints are soon limited to material published in the Standard magazines. The "Features" are pared back. "The Lowdown" is firmed out to such visiting writers as Stewart Sterling and Harold Gluck. (Gluck had been steadily contributing non-fiction articles to every issue of the Columbia Publications' Famous Detective.)

In spite of these changes, the

magazine continued to offer the authentic old wine in glossy bottles, lean and attractive. Usually.

The Winter 1953 issue has a dreary dark cover, but it contains crackling stories by Powell, Ballard, Roan, and Frederick C. Davis--whose "Stop The Presses" is from the December 1938 Black Mask. Both the Roan and Powell stories seem to be originals.

As a bonus, there is also a Hildgarde Wither/John J. Malone adventure, "Once Upon A Train" (1950), by Craig Rice and Stuart Palmer.

Stewart Sterling again wrote "The Lowdown" for the Spring 1953 issue, plus a new story, "Model for Murder." In addition to a strong selection of writers--Fredric Brown, Merle Conatiner, and Wyatt Blasingame--there was a story by Louis L'Amour, "With Death In His Corner," reprinted from the December 1948 Thrilling Detective.

The following issue, Summer 1953, contained reprints from Popular Detective, G-Men Detective, Detective Novel Magazine, Thrilling Mystery, and the E. Hoffman Price "Murder In Florida" from the December 1940 Thrilling Detective. There was

enough variety to please the most picky, and writers included such old pros as W.T. Ballard and Norman Daniels.

But competent writers, interesting stories, appealing covers were not enough. By then, excellence no longer made much difference. Two issues later, with the publication of Winter 1954, the magazine ended.

Over the course of its life, 5 Detective Novels had published ninety long short stories, or novelettes, or call them what you will. Almost incidentally, it had also published about forty short stories. This imposing mass of fiction, generally of superior quality, provides a fascinating view of the longer pulp fiction mystery during the late 1930s and 1940s.

Few magazines approached the sustained quality of 5 Detective Novels. It was, almost certainly, one of the finest of the reprint magazines, rivaled only by Street & Smith's Detective Story Annual.

And it was, even for those not drawn by mystery stories, a shining example of the art of the pulp magazine.



COLLECTING ON A BUDGET:
3 WAYS TO COLLECT PULPS
WITHOUT SPENDING A FORTUNE
by
Jeffery Fisher

When many people receive their first pulp catalog or sale list they are understandably dismayed to discover that the prices of many pulps are rather high. Quite a few people will simply give the hobby up right then and there, because they would have to spend a small fortune to put together even a modest collection. After all, even a short-run title of only fifteen or so issues, can run into some money at five or ten buck per issue.

However, there are three methods which allow collectors on limited budgets to pursue their hobby.

1-The first thing a beginning collector should do is shop around for the best dealers. There are often great differences in the price of pulps between dealers. As an example, take the science fiction pulp, Fantastic Story Quarterly/Magazine. I recently saw one dealer's ad for issue #1, Spring 1950, in very good condition go for \$15. Another dealer had the same issue, in the same condition for \$7.00, over 50% less expensive! As with anything else, shopping around pays off, and many fiction magazines have classified ads in the back which often list pulp-dealer's addresses. Look at a wide selection of dealer's catalogs/lists, then pick the ones with the fairest prices to do business with.

2-Dealers aren't the only sources for pulps, both flea markets and garage sales are good places to look for them. Quite often you can find pulps at such sales for as little as 25 or 50 cents each, and often in good or very good condition. I once purchased fifteen sports pulps from circa 1940 at a flea market for \$3.75- only a quarter each! The same pulps would've cost twenty dollars from most dealers, maybe more. Most

communities have a least one regularly held flea market once or even twice a week, so get into the habit of visiting it a couple times a month. (Don't get me wrong, you are not likely to find a horde of pulps on every trip to the market, but it might be worth it when you find some treasures!) Occasionally used book stores have pulps, as do some Salvation Army stores. If there are some of these establishments in your town, start paying them a visit once a month or so.

3- Finally, we come to condition. Condition makes a big difference in a pulp's value, and hence its cost from the dealer. However, if you are willing to accept pulps in lower condition, such as good or with a major defect, such as tears in the cover or spine damage, you can save a bundle. Many dealers offer pulps with such defects for as much as 50% off the very good price. A good example would be a purchase I made recently. I purchased a copy of the January 1939 issue of Startling Stories (as you can see, science fiction pulps are my favorite genre!) without a back cover, for \$5.00. The same dealer had another copy in good condition for \$15.00, so you can see how much I saved. A good collection can be built by this method without sacrificing the fun of pulp collecting.

By following these three simple steps, anyone can collect pulps without putting too big of a dent in their bank accounts. They'll also have a lot of fun in the process, and that's what it is all about, isn't it?

PULP COVER FAVORITES

by

Gary Lovisi

To ask a collector to choose his favorite of anything can be a frustrating and an almost impossible task --- and when the subject is your favorite pulp magazine cover --- well, that seems to stretch impossibility right on into the realm of the infinite.

There are so many fine pulp covers, by many different artists in such a variety of genres and styles that it can often boggle the mind. Some of my favorites of the bunch include such stalwart works as the Margaret Brundage covers for WEIRD TALES; the Frank R. Paul, Kelly Freas, Ed Emsh, and Virgil Finlay covers for all those old science fiction pulps; and of course the good girl and weird menace art of George Rozen, Earle Bergey, and Rudolph Belarski. Not to forget for a moment the hero pulps, and especially the artwork done by Walter Baumhofer.

However, if I had to narrow things down to one particular issue of a pulp title, and one special artist, I would have to pick that favorite issue to be UNCANNY TALES for November 1939, with its truly fantastic sf-inspired weird menace/shudder pulp cover by the great Norman Saunders.

UNCANNY TALES was a shudder pulp, as Robert Kenneth Jones says of them in his fine book called THE SHUDDER PULPS, it was a "...golden age of ghoulish delight that produced the grialiest, goriest, most outrageous mystery-terror fiction ever sold on the American newsstand." These flourished in the late 1930's and the early 1940's.

This issue of UNCANNY TALES is sort of a special case because it has the traditional shudder pulp cover art formula transposed into a science fictional setting of spaceship, aliens, and ray guns. It is also one of a very small number of the true shudder pulps that fully crosses over

into the sf genre---at least in the area of cover art.

The cover itself is a rousing piece of art, fantastically executed by Saunders to become what must certainly be one of the better shudder pulp covers that's appeared on any of these magazines. With its green-skinned, ghoul-like aliens, weirdly menacing the prerequisite beautiful and nearly unclothed girl aboard their spaceship---while in bursts the grim-faced hero---a handsome, broad, Doc Savage all-American, who barrels through the entrance of the alien craft with blaster blasting away so that he can dutifully save his girl from whatever menace these weirdo's may have concocted. Sex, lust, sadism, is all there in the art---and though mild for its day---was present in the stories as well.

This cover is a great example of shudder pulp art, beautifully designed and executed with all the standard contrivances I've mentioned---as well as having one of the green aliens holding the girl (in a vicious choke hold) so that he can use a hypodermic syringe upon her as a prelude to who knows what ghastly deeds!

Though there are plenty of weird menace/shudder stories within this magazine---and though it has this fine science-fictional cover---it turns out that there are no science fiction stories in this issue at all! To go even further, obviously, we have a situation where the cover depicts a scene that isn't even in the magazine! Nevertheless it is a gorgeous cover---and it is done extremely well---it doesn't need a reason to exist to be appreciated.

Inside the magazine are nine shudder stories of various lengths and subjects by many of the leading pulpsters of the day. The only real sf writer represented is Ray Cummings (he had a lot of sf published in AMAZING STORIES and other sf mag in the early years---and was a member of the lab team that worked for Thomas Edison---he wrote sf on the side) but

UNCANNY TALES

NOV.

TALES
OF
HORROR
AND
TERROR

15¢

SATAN IS
MY LOVER.

by
WM. A. ROSSI

PAWN OF HIDEOUS DESIRE

chilling thriller by
BAY CUMMINGS



DANCE
WITH MY
BRIDE
AND DIE!

by
ARTHUR J. BURKS

A RED CIRCLE
MAGAZINE

his story in this issue is a nine page shudder tale entitled, "Pawn Of Hideous Desire". Other stories in the issue follow the genre format and formula, with a penchant for bizarre titles such as, "Satan Is My Lover", by W.A. Rossi, "Dance With My Bride and Die", by Arthur J. Burks, "Lovely Bodies for the Butcher", by Russell Gray, and the lurid and unbelievable, "Debutantes For the Damned", by Brent North.

All these stories are formula fiction, and most of them are dated and predictable---and yet, they are all readable and fun, campy and nostalgic, and some still contain a good shudder or two.

One interesting note, the magazine contains an ad by Timely Publications for their new comic books

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WORST PULP COVER
 by
 John P. Gunnison

Call me a puriest, call me crazy, or just call me a cab, but I feel that the cover for DOC SAVAGE Mar-Apr. 1948 issue is one of the worst. Now I must say that I have nothing against Cartier's work, in fact I think it is kind of striking, but the cover has nothing to do with Doc Savage. In fact Doc is buried some seventy-seven pages in his own magazine! He has been benched to second story status by a story by Robert A. Nicolls, REVOLT! Now isn't that like benching Babe Ruth during his prime for Chico Ruiz. (For those non-baseball type people out there, Chico called himself Mr. Splinter for sitting on the bench so often.)

The cover reminds me more of a cover for an E.C. comic book or that of a cover for a Horror magazine. A head impaled on a sword with its blood dripping toward the hilt. Gory, with a capital "G". Also I would like to know, how come the sword carrier hasn't been burned to a

done in four colors---its for an outfit begun around 1939 called Marvel Comics. You may have heard of them. Their five new comics are KA-ZAR THE GREAT, THE HUMAN TORCH, THE MASKED RIDER ("Rider of western 2-gun justice"), THE ANGEL ("Gang-smasher supreme"), and THE SUB-MARINER ("wonderman of the undersea"). This might very well be one of the first ads for the beginning line of Marvel Comics.

UNCANNY TALES for November 1939 is an interesting and highly collectible issue because the mag and cover art are such striking examples of the weird menace/shudder pulps when they were at their height of sensationalism and popularity. One look at this gorgeous Saunders cover and I'm sure this issue will become a favorite of pulp collectors everywhere.

crispy critter standing that close to the flames. I can also only assume that he is holding the standard with his other hand since there could not be two dummies risking their lives for a head.

I guess I can really say that they truth in the cover is not really the cover, but the idea that the editor was tired of Doc Savage getting top billing in his own magazine and decided to shake up the readers by making him second billing.

Now I have not read the story that moved Doc down a notch, in fact I am probably correct in saying that it is another typical piece of pulp fiction. Turn the page and see if you understand what I mean, not a bad piece of work, but as I started off maybe I'm a puriest or crazy; but I feel that a pulp baring the title, Doc Savage, should have a cover concerning Doc Savage!



REVOLT

COMPLETE HISTORICAL NOVEL

BY ROBERT A. NICOLLS

Author of

"BY THE BEARD OF RAGNAR"

THE IMMORTAL
"BIG NOSE" SERRANO
by
Will Murray

The Depression was a time for heroes. The pulp magazines of that era unleashed a torrent of characters who remain famous to this day. Characters like The Shadow, Doc Savage, and many others. Everyone seems to remember them well. At the same time, people forgot they didn't just spring into being. In one way, they were a reaction to the anti-heroes of the pulp, the gangster heroes who, bolstered by Prohibition and romanticized films, ruled one corner of the pulp magazine world in the late Twenties and the early Thirties. They are a forgotten breed today, with the only titles of certain publications, like The Underworld (the first gangster pulp, inspired by the 1927 film of the same name), Racketeer Stories, Gang World and Underworld Romances, remembered by a small group of collectors. Read avidly, they came under unrelenting censorship until they were eventually tamed or obliterated. Most of the heat was generated in New York City, where certain titles were pulled from the stands. The publishers of Gang World dodged that peril by an ingenious method. They had special covers printed up for copies to be sold in New York State, where the magazine was called Blue Steel--but only on the cover.

The gangster era of the pulps produced no enduring titles, no superstar authors, and as far as I know, only one long-running--er--hero.

I speak of the great, the redoubtable "Big Nose" Serrano.

Serrano was...well, he was tougher than Doc Savage, more brutal than the Spider, and he had a bigger nose than The Shadow. The creation of a pulp writer with the unlikely name of Anatole France Feldman, Serrano was a gang lord who appeared in the noto-

rious Gangster Stories around 1931. But he wasn't just any old gang lord. No sir. According to his author, he was also "a poet, a man with a soul; the scourge of the high and mighty--the lone defender of the poor and oppressed." He was also not above hijacking liquor trucks to make a living, a little shake-down now and again, and taking a "rat for a ride," if he deserved it. At least, that was the Serrano style when I first encountered him in a episodic novel entitled The Crime Crusade in the March 1932 Gangster Stories. In that novel, Serrano was fresh from his exploits in the February issue, in which he successfully ran for Assemblyman of Chicago's "Bloody Tenth" district in the charming novel, Hell Bent for Election.

I suspect that this development in the life of the great Serrano was an attempt to clean him up a bit, the public having, by 1932, tired of celebrating gangsters. In any case, The Crime Crusade tells the rollicking story of the good-natured crook's attempts to make the Bloody Tenth safe for women, children and honest graft. Celebrating his election with his mob--Charlie LeBrett, McGinnis, O'Leary, Terry and Puccini--Big Nose is approached by rival gangster Nick Mamoulian, to join forces. But Big Nose sends him packing because Mamoulian is 1) an Armenian and 2) "a louay moll-buzzer"--meaning that he trafficks in young girls. Big Nose spends the rest of the novel undercutting Mamoulian's action, which included razing a playground for development, jacking up the price of milk, and other crimes--most of them perfectly legal.

Big Nose's approach was somewhat on the unorthodox side. In order to prevent the razing of a local playground, Big Nose and his boys showed up one fine morning at the playground and greeted the construction workers in short pants and schoolboy caps. At first the workers--all Mamoulian henchlings--didn't know what to do about the sight of grown men playing

tag and speaking in childish lisps, so they attempted to toss them out of the play area. Their mistake. Backed up by the neighborhood kids, Big Nose whaled the tar out of the workers. It was quite a hilarious donnybrook.

Virtually every incident seems designed to show what a good guy Big Nose and his boys are. Take the scene in which they are forced to rub out a squealer name Babe Groh:

"Taking a rat for a ride is a grim business under the best of circumstances and it is a hundred per cent more difficult when the gent in question, who is about to receive it at the business end of a gun, shows yellow. If the lad can stand up and take it, the thing is simply done and soon over. But if, as in the case of Babe Groh, he whispers and whines and begs for mercy, it's a tough, uncomfortable, unethical proposition."

Author Feldman assures us that in murdering Groh, Big Nose Serrano is motivated only by the highest of ideals:

"Serrano was too big, too generous, to be animated by any motive of personal vengeance. What the Babe had done to him he would shrug away, laugh off. But what he had tried to do to the kids of the Bloody Tenth--sh, that was a different matter entirely. He was a rat indeed, making his illicit profits off the helpless, defenseless poor.

"He had to go."

"So they knock Groh out and do what's necessary:

"They dragged the unconscious form out of the car, dragged him some twenty feet down the road and propped him against a tree. Groh was out from fear and from nervous shock, then from the blow LeBrett had delivered.

"Serrano spoke--the only words spoken during the entire proceedings.

"Let's give the rat a break. We'll give it to him while he's out."

"With an eye to all the nice-ties and formalities that the occasion demanded, Puccini stepped swif-

tly over to the groaning Groh and with deft fingers unbuttoned his coat and vest. He threw them back to expose the white expanse of the traitor's shirt. Then he lined him up with his two companions. Guna was drawn, hefted a moment in knotted fists.

"Serrano gave the nod."

"Three guns cracked as one; three acid slugs of lead ate deep into Groh's heart within the circumference of a silver dollar. As if by magic there suddenly appeared an ever-widening spot of red of Babe Groh's shirt.

"Puccini attended to the formalities again. With a slow step he marched over to the dead body clumped against the tree and with swift fingers carefully buttoned the vest and coat over the forever stilled heart of their victim.

"The ride back to town was made in silence. No word was said until they hit the outskirts of Minetta. Then:

"I think I'll take a run down to the Follies and see that blonde," said Serrano. "Jeez, I need a laugh."

"We'll make it a foursome," said LeBrett. "I'll drag Peggy along."

"Yeah?" complained Puccini. "What about me?"

"You!" boomed Serrano. "It's time you were home. The old woman'll be looking for you to wipe the dishes."

Now how can you help but love a bunch of characters like that? Makes one want to become friendly with his local loan sharks.

But Serrano is not just hot stuff when it comes to shooting unconscious thugs. He's a real man of action in a scrap, too:

"In few silent minutes Serrano's preliminary orders were executed. Then, like a Napoleon, he surveyed the field of battle before the charge. Sure of his strategy, sure of himself, sure of his men, he whipped out his automatic and expanded his

leather lungs.

"He waited dramatically for a tense moment. Then, high and clear on the still night air, came his clarion battle cry:

"Come on, men, clean 'em up!"
(...)

Serrano was the first to crash his hugh bulk against the staunch front door. An unholy light was in his eye; his mad song on his lips. LeBrett curaed and heaved beside him as they bruised their shoulders against the barrier.

"This was immense. This was a venture altogether worthy of the great Serrano. To storm a stronghold and take it without a shot! Ah, that was something to sing about--and Big Nose sang. His song filled the night and for LeBrett's edification he proved the old saying concerning the relative value of swords and pens."

Yes, Serrano was sort of the Sinatra of his day--in more ways than one. He was also a pretty mean poet. If you don't believe me, sample this authentic piece of Serrano verse:

"Memoulian is an oily gent
Who makes his dough off women
But if he pokes his mug near me
He'll get a hell of a trimmin'."

But Serrano's true asset is his awesome and versatile olfactory organ, or schonzzola, as it's often called: "Serrano threw as appraising eye over the assembled mob, and a grim smile of satisfaction played about his huge mouth. His bulbous nose radiated with dynamic energy."

They don't write 'em like that no more--I mean anymore!

(In an historical aside, it's interesting to note that the man who illustrated most of Serrano's capers, Tom Lovell, also rendered the exploits of that mother master of the flared nostril, The Shadow, for many years. But Lovell got to paint the covers to Gangster Stories, where he never painted a single Shadow cover.)

After wading through the men behind the "dirty" racketts in Chi-

cago, (defined as any racket too unsavory for the Big Boy himself) and obliterating them to a man, Big Nose corners Nick Mamoulian and coldly pronounces a death sentence on him. But before he can fire, one of Big Nose's lady friends shoots him in revenge for all the girls he corrupted. And then it's off at a trot for Big Nose Serrano, who just remembered that he's late for a date with that Follies blonde, a date that will no doubt lead into the next announced Serrano novel, Round Heels. What a guy!

The career of Big Nose Serrano was relatively short. There was a string of novels in Gangster Stories until it expired in 1932, when public pressure forced the publisher to withdraw the title from the stands. But that was not the end of the great Serrano. The very next year he resurfaced in The Return of Serrano, in Greater Gangster Stories, a title that looked auspiciously like its earlier namesake, but claimed to be the work of an entirely different publisher. Greater Gangster Stories was not long for this world, either, but when The Gang Magazine premiered in May 1935, the Big Boy made his third comeback in a novelette entitled "Lead and Lyrics." Then he vanished from the pulps. Too bad. As a rule, the gang pulps were pretty rotten stuff, but Big Nose had humor and a definite flair. As did author Feldman, who later ghosted Phantom Detective novels, and then vanished from the world of letters, content no doubt, in the knowledge that he'd created a true original.

10¢ **Red Star Mystery** JUNE



When Midnight Monsters Prowl and Evil Grips the City's Throat Summon

DON DIAVOLO, THE SCARLET WIZARD

His First Amazing Adventure Is Excitingly Told in

GHOST OF THE UNDEAD ★ Book-length Novel
Complete in This Issue

by

Nick Carr

PRESENTING THE PRESTIDIGITATOR
DON DIAVOLO
by
Nick Carr

Preface: Over a period of time I've had the great privilege of reviewing for various publications three well known pulp characters, Dan Fowler of G-Men; Jethro Dumont of the Green Lama; Cary Adair of Captain Satan. Now another personality joins this ever growing list, that of Don Diavolo, magician-detective extraordinary. If you, the reader, liked Richard Foster's Green Lama series, this individual will be a welcome addition into the fold. I enjoyed reading the novels, and the stories are well written and move smoothly right along. I highly recommend Don Diavolo knowing that many hours of pleasure and escape perusal await.



Don Diavolo, the Scarlet Wizard, the Maharajah, and Nicholas Alexander Houdin were all name he used. (The last one incidentally was actually a combination of the names of some very famous old-time magicians.) He performed at the Manhattan Music Hall, New York City, and had been there about six months when we first met him. His attire while on stage was



The Maharajah
(Don Diavolo to You)

scarlet evening clothes and a red mask. He was a magician of the first order, plus having some additional qualifications such as: A: He was an expert makeup artist. B: he was an expert a ju-jitsu. C: He was a ventriloquist. D: He knew several languages and had travelled extensively to far away places, including Tibet and India. E: He would often disguise himself as the Maharajah of Vrai-Loo, an East Indian potentate who spoke with a stiff-backed English accent of one educated at Oxford. In this disguise he used just a very light coating of makeup over his face. He wore a tuxedo, adjusted a monocle in the right eye, then placed a long, pale green turban around his head. He carried a long black cigarette holder, smoked gold-tipped cigarettes usually kept in a thin silver case. He had a small automatic, painted flesh color. A green carnation went into the coat lapel.

As Don Diavolo he owned two automobiles. One, a sixteen cylinder Packard, painted a flaming scarlet color. Two, an inconspicuous black sedan with a supercharged motor.

He had one pet, a cat named SATAN, very large and black as the night. Satan had the run of his house.



Karl



Woody

Physical description: Tall, young with a lithe muscular figure of an athlete. He had a lean, tanned but firmly molded face, handsome, yet mysteriously engaging. Iron willed endurance. Black eyes. Black hair. He was possessed of a devil-may-care nature, nerves of steel, lightning thought and reaction in the face of any danger. He had a real sense of humor and sparkled with boundless energy. His smooth, sleek appearance caused the fluttering of many female hearts.



Horse Shoe Kid

Don Diavolo indeed had a few intrepid, very special individuals who were associated with him:

KARL HARTZ

He was the private scientific wizard behind the scenes. He designed and built the gadgets and mechanisms which were the "secret of Diavolo's illusions." Physical description: A stoop-shouldered little man with a great bushy shock of white hair. He wore thick-lensed glasses. Background: At one time a construction engineer. He was a graduate of a noted European University. Failing eyesight halted this line of work.

For years he toured the vaudeville stages as "Professor Nemo, Memory Expert." Diavolo encountered Karl in Budapest. At the time Karl was being treated by a noted eye surgeon. In time he could see again with the aid of glasses. He turned to aiding Diavolo and was at his side from then on.

In one particular novel Karl gave a very interesting explanation worth recording here: "Filing cabinets," he spoke, "are mostly about 12 x 12 x 24. That's 3456 cubic inches. I could almost squeeze into that space myself. It's just a matter of knowing the proper way to build up. I built a trick for Thurston once in which we got a five-

The Aides-de-Camp

foot-six assistant into a 14 x 14 x 24 box. The guy weighed 137 pounds. That's 3900 cubic inches of man fitting into 3704 cubic inches of space."

J. HAYWOOD "WOODY" HAINES, JR.

A former All-American football star with a build to "back it up." He was a "dynamic young man," with friends all along Broadway. He was a crack reporter for the New York Press, and authored a column titled, "Behind The Scenes." He usually wore fifteen dollar pearl-gray hats, and often carried a .38 Colt revolver. He was also the boyfriend of a lady named Patricia Collins.

CHAN CHANDAR MANCHU

He was of Chinese-Indian ancestry, his father had been a high-cast Indian; his mother, a Manchu princess. He spoke a plain, almost too correct accent that was acquired in Europe. Educated at Eaton. He was Diavolo's dresser and general "boy-of-all-works." In a sense, a jack of all trades and actually master of most of them. At one time he hunted tigers in India and also knew ju-jitsu.

Description: A bland, brown skinned Eurasian boy, usually solemn-faced, with coal black eyes. He was said to be a reader of pulp stories. This was verified in a statement by Diavolo: He laughed. "Chan has been reading Weird Horror Tales of maybe Fantastic Jungle Stories," he remarked.

THE HORSESHOE KID

A professional gambler who could make a deck of cards sit up and beg, lie down and roll over, and deal out a poker hand of any sort desired. He once worked the three-shell game in the circus and was still acquainted with many of the performers.



Inspector
Church

Description: An open-faced, guileless-looking man. He had several aliases: Melvin Skinner, John B. Crooks, and H.C. Orville.

PATRICIA AND MICKEY COLLINS

Identical twins. Diavolo couldn't even tell them apart. Naturally this kept things stirred up twice as much for him. Diavolo sometimes called them Pat and Mike. They were a part of his magic act, and were told never to be seen together in public unless one wore a black wig. (Mickey usually did this).

Woody Haines could tell them apart only when he kissed them. Pat, "always returned the kiss as if she meant it."

Pat sometimes dressed as "The Maharani of Vdai-Loo." Both girls were young, with blue eyes and golden yellow hair. It was Mickey who usually did the driving for Diavolo. They had one brother, Glenn Collins, who returned to New York City for Hollywood after the studio failed to renew his contract. He apparently had fallen head over heels in love with a actress who "threw him over for a producer." As a result Glenn

started drinking and things went down from that point on, as he gambled and played the horses. When in New York City Glenn stayed at the Drury Lane (an actor's hotel) on East Fortieth Street. He got into trouble with the law, and Don Diavolo offered to help.

In his very first episode Patricia Collina was rendered unconscious: "There were hands around my throat. He pressed with his fingers right behind my ears."

"There are two nerve centers there, which when pressed upon properly," a doctor told her, "will cause unconsciouness."

INSPECTOR CHURCH

Church was an Inspector for the New York City Homicide Department with headquarters at Centre Street. (Readers of the Green Lama should by now know this location well. It was a dingy-gray building.) Church was married and every Sunday when off duty, it was his habit to read and thoroughly digest the newspaper.

He was a brusque, cocksure, suspicious man possessed by "an explosive forcefulness that usually threw off sparks like a spinning dynamo."

He also looked too much like a cop to really be anything else, being a heavy, broadshouldered man with a jutting square jaw which had a "determined forcefulness about it." Church also had frosty blue eyes, and a neatly trimmed gray military mustache. He had a straight forward mind that disliked anything that couldn't be neatly labeled and filed away. He had what is described as a "violent dislike" for the word 'vanish'. Upon hearing it Church would erupt into half a dozen fiery exclamations of an unprintable sort.

Once when Diavolo used ventriloquism, Church told him: "You better start practicing to throw your voice at the foreman of the jury when he comes in with the verdict!"

Church was always attempting to toss the magician into jail. But naturally he never quite made it.

THE DRESSING ROOM

Don Diavolo's dressing room was up on the fifth floor of the Manhattan Theater Building. It could be reached by elevator from the stage. The door to the room itself was of fire resisting metal. His name was on the door with the insignia of a small red mask. Passing through the outer anti-room, one entered the smaller cubicle that served as his inner dressing area. The room had a small ceiling air vent. There was the usual furniture items including a wardrobe.

The corridor doorway leading to the dressing room had been especially installed and locked automatically once closed. It had no keyhole. The trick as to how it opened was known by only three people. In the hall was a window that looked down on Fifth street.

THE TWO HOUSES

The place: Greenwich Village.
The addressees: 77 and 79 Fox Streets.

To reach the above one must go across Sheridan Square, into one of the small, tucked away streets beyond that led into a cul-de-sac. 77 Fox Street was (as the newspapers called it) the House of Mystery where Don Diavolo resided when he was playing in New York City. It was the third house from the corner and contained all sorts of gadgets and devices installed by Karl Hartz.

The structure at 77 was a carriage house of red brick. There were no spaces between the houses, most of them being a hundred years old. On the bell push of 79 was a card reading: Parish House--The Rev. O.O. Van Lio, D.D. (If re-arranged, the letters spelled out Don Diavolo). Driving up the magician touched a button on the car dashboard. The carriage house doors moved inward, folding back on themselves. Next he

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Mystery.



Three-Ring Death Swings in Mid-Air and Strikes with

The Claws of Satan

Another Hair-Raising Adventure in Crime for

DON DIAVOLO The Scarlet Wizard *

Complete Book-
Length Novel

blew a horn that gave off a note too high in frequency for the human ear to hear. Once the car was inside the doors closed automatically. Out of the car, Diavolo spoke aloud the words, "Om me-ni ped me hum!" and a sliding panel moved in the walls. Inside of the house, set in the wall (probably right in the living room

area) was a large glass panel. Looking through it, Diavolo could see his own living room right next door. (Inside the House of Magic the mirror was set right above the fireplace in the wall. In reality it was made of two-way glass.) Diavolo had only to touch a button and he could hear the words that were being spoken, with

also a telephone connected so Diavolo could cut himself in on any conversation.

Diavolo used several signalling devices, one was a library table in house number 77, (Diavolo's living quarters) on which sat two skulls serving as book ends. If the lower jaw of one of the skulls was moved to make the skull grin, it meant the abode was occupied.

On the wall of 79 (the minister's house) there stood a large three-sheet poster. It held a picture of Hermann the Great. A simple hand pass before it and the poster would laid up and out of sight. One then walked through the opening right into Diavolo's living room. The opening closed automatically.

Near to the archway in the hall of 77 was another table, with a hidden spring along the top edge. The spring would control a trap door. At the hall's end just was a blank wall but with a handclap (three times) caused one section of the floor to drop slowly like an elevator into the basement workshop belonging to Karl.

Indeed the house contained numerous secrets. Obviously within the walls were quite a number of delicately operated secret mechanisms. The house (77) was "impregnable as a fortress," with burglar alarms set all over.

On the walls in the living room could be seen framed-autographed photos of such famous magicians as Thurston, plus one large portrait of the great Harry Houdini.

A remarkable place to live indeed!

SOME EXTRA CHARACTERS

We thought the reader might be interested in a few of the individuals who appeared with the four novels:

Jerry: A theater call-boy who

liked to bet on the horses.

Cleever: The District Attorney.

Dr. Pepper: A rabbity-little man with a droopy mustache. He had a quiet, confident air about him.

Dr. Graff, M.D.: He was the man who treated the Diavolo group when called.

Colonel Ernst Kasselmeyer: An ex-Pruasian officer, now theater manager. He was straight backed, with a large stomach, sparse hair and a booming voice.

Brophy: New York City Homicide Squad, with a rank of sergeant, then a lieutenant, then back to a sergeant again. In the last story he was both. (Possibly Church got angry with him or the author forgot). There is one interesting paragraph in "The Enchanted Dagger," p.42, "A sergeant of detectives idly touched a prayer wheel and sent it spinning through a dozen revolutions, not knowing that he had sent the mystic formula-On ma-ni padme Hum--winging its way heavenward and earned himself an infinitesimal advance towards the great void of Nirvana."

Dr. Conrad Bent: We've included him only because he had some very interesting comments relative to the subject of hypnosis. For instance: "You can't hypnotize just anybody and certainly not without their cooperation. About one third of any group of persons can be hypnotized into a deep or somnambulist stage. Another third can be put into a light sleep, and the remaining third get a straight zero rating as hypnotic subjects." (See "The Enchanted Dagger," p. 51.)

THE NOVELS

There were four issues as follows:

Vol. 1 #1 June 1940.

Ghost of the Undead

Vol. 1 #2 August 1940.

Death Out of Thin Air

Vol. 1 #2 October 1940.

Claws of Satan

Vol. 1 #4 December 1940.
The Enchanted Dagger

(The reader will note I have underlined No. 2., of the October 1940 issue. This naturally should have read Number 3, and was probably a misprint in the magazine. But for the record, this is the way it was printed.)

THE MAGAZINE

All issues I had were in fair condition, with only slight brownish tint along the edges of various pages. Covers however were less intact having numerous torn edges. There was just a faint pulp odor from the paper we have learned to love and inhale, leaving the head spinning as one recalls bygone days of the 1940's when the magazine first appeared in the stands.

Throughout all four novels one finds the use of Author's Footnotes, although not as extensive as seen in Operator #5 or the Green Lama. But these are most informative and helpful. The reader will see the name of one Montague Summers frequently mentioned. Although I don't have specific references mentioned, I can recommend two additional books. One, "The Vampire, His Kith and Kin," and "The Vampire in Europe," by the same author.

The magazine spines are in white with the date--Red Star Mystery--and price. In addition four small red stars. Red Star Mystery was published bi-monthly by the Frank A. Munsey Company, 280 Broadway, New York, NY. William T. Dwart, President and treasurer. William T. Dwart, Jr., secretary. Price was ten cents.

Each Novel contained the lead story, one novelette, and three short stories. The last three issues had a column by the Editors, "Out of the Hat." There were one hundred and twelve pages, not including the front and back covers.

Interior art was excellent, by V.E. Pyles, especially those of the

featured characters. The cover artist was identified on two of the four novels as H.T. Ward. Most unique cover was the October issue in our opinion.

In glancing through all of the advertisement pages we find mention of Matalea (The White Savage) as seen in Red Star Adventures; Double Detective told of a Green Lama story, "Babies For Sale." Another "The Silver Buck," (a Red Star western character) whose calling card was a silver dollar, Cavalier Classics, featured heroes like Zorro, Tizzo, and Dougall; Argosy Weekly had a preview look at the new standard front cover design.

The Diavolo stories mentioned several well known personalities within the stories, such as: Dorothy Lamour, Marie Antionette, George Raft, Lily Dache, (a fashion designer), Clark Gable, Chester Morris, Robert Taylor, Rudolph Valentino, Bela Lugosi, and Mayor LaGuardia of New York City.

THE AUTHOR

The author's name was given as Stewart Towne, which as most of you know by now was another house-name. His real identity was CLAYTON RAWSON. he was himself a magician. His name incidentally was mentioned in a Green Lama story, "The Case of the Mad Magi."

Here now in conclusion is a brief elucidation of the novels:

Ghost of the Undead: A vampire is on the loose in the canyons of Manhattan. He was supposedly one Gilles de Rais who once lived in France during the Fifteenth Century. Also on hand is a mysterious Count Draco.

Death Out of Thin Air: The Invisible Man strikes! In this one Don Diavolo almost suffocates inside a vault.

The Claws of Satan: Don Diavolo goes to the circus and tangles with a killer.

The Enchanted Dagger: Diavolo

finds himself in trouble seeking the treasure of Alexander the Great. There is also a mysterious knife that acts without a hand to guide its blade. Diavolo takes on a ten thousand dollar bet.

EPILOGUE

I am fully indebted once again to pulpster Lester Belcher for the indefinite loan of all four Don Diavolo adventures. We have only one issue in our collection for research purposes. Over a span of years now Lester Belcher has been coming to my aid when all others failed. I thank him again for that.



Count Draco

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SUPERMAN

DOC SAVAGE—man
of Master Mind
and Body . . .

Follow his glorious
Adventures every
month in the

DOC SAVAGE
10¢ MAGAZINE

AT ALL NEWS STANDS

A STREET & SMITH PUBLICATION

THE SKIPPER

DECEMBER 1936

10¢

"I TAKE WHAT I WANT
WHEN I WANT IT!"
"Cap Fury"



THE FIGHTING FURY
by
Link Hullar
and
Will Murray

"I Take What I Want When I Want It!" So read the editorial cover blurb on the first issue of THE SKIPPER, December 1936. These blurbs, notable quotes from the Skipper himself, were a standard of the magazine covers and included such tough-guy gems as "Life's a scrap. Stand up, don't run!" and "Don't borrow trouble but if you do, pay it back!" These short snappy quips from the magazine's hero were characteristic of this pulp and the hero: hard hitting, uncompromising, and poorly developed.



CAP FURY

The Skipper, Captain John Fury, was created by Street and Smith circulation director, Henry W. Ralston, who created most of the Street and Smith characters including Doc Savage, the Whisperer, the Avenger and others, doubtless wrote the outline for the character of Cap Fury and possibly even sketched out the story breakdown for the first novel. From the beginning THE SKIPPER was to be a variant of the successful Doc Savage formula, as the Whisperer was a Shadow variant. THE SKIPPER'S

angle, or gimmic, was sea stories just as Bill Barnes's was aviation and neither character was destined to a long career as a lead character in his own magazine.

THE SKIPPER, along with the THE WHISPERER, was born from a desire to capitalize on the success of Street and Smith's popular DOC SAVAGE and SHADOW series. However, both of these titles were not simple imitations of these leading pulp titles but were instead variations on the popular characters; variations with important differences. In the case of THE SKIPPER the high moral tone which pervades the Doc Savage stories is gone. Cap Fury is a harsh, at times brutal character, whose sense of justice is considerably different from the ideology of Doc. In THE SKIPPER readers were treated to violence, nudity, and a type of cold death-dealing vengeance not witnessed in the pages of its inspiration and predecessor.

These innovations were no accident. John L. Nanovic edited both DOC SAVAGE and THE SKIPPER which indicates that the different emphasis and atmosphere in THE SKIPPER represented a deliberate Street and Smith sales tactic. This idea was confirmed by Nanovic in the December 1936 issue of WRITER'S DIGEST where he informed potential contributors that "THE SKIPPER is thoroughly adult in its appeal -- not at all juvenile as some people surmised from the first cover." By 1936 Street and Smith was concerned over the growing popularity of competing hero pulp titles such as THE SPIDER and OPERATOR 5. The sex and violence in THE SKIPPER were designed to capture a new and different reading audience than the Doc reader while capitalizing on the hero pulp formula. If this indeed was their intention they could not have chosen a better author than Laurence Donovan, who wrote the series under the name Wallace Brooker.

Donovan had written for SPICY DETECTIVE in 1934 and would go on the write both Phantom Detective and Black Bat stories. His writing is characteristically brutal; filled with the qualities Street and Smith was seeking -- violence and a touch of sexual sadism. While Donovan's Doc stories were often very good and excellent at their best (MURDER MELODY, HE COULD STOP THE WORLD, and many others), his Skipper work lacked development and polish. The stories and characters are one-dimensional - flat, stale, and lacking in that special quality possessed by the finest of pulp heroes - duende. The differences in quality may lie in the fact that with Doc the writer had a character and supporting cast already

Rite Dun-can's eyes widened with fascinated horror. Then . . .



clearly developed and a writing style to follow from Doc stories by Dent. With the Skipper, Donovan was on his own and he did not fare well.

Street and Smith had recruited Donovan to write Doc stories with the hope of going twice monthly with the bronze hero. When this idea fell through the writer was shifted to THE SKIPPER project under editor Nanovic. Donovan was also assigned to write THE WHISPERER so that the author



PETER DOOM

wrote the two series in tandem; neither was to prove a great success. Although THE SKIPPER survived for twelve issues it never really got off the ground.

Poor packaging plagued THE SKIPPER from the beginning. The covers, by L.D.T. (Lawrence Toney), are unexciting in both concept and execution. The magazine was padded with numerous interior illustrations left over from the old SEA STORIES magazine which had no relevance to the story content of the issue. Furthermore, even the title was poorly chosen. THE SKIPPER hardly evokes the "hard-hitting, two fisted, swash-buckling" image the editors were seeking. Cap Fury, or Cap, as the Skipper is commonly called, would have been a more appropriate title -- Doc Savage; Cap Fury -- the similarity is obvious now and would have been obvious to readers conditioned to react to the sound patterns of DOC SAVAGE magazine.

The Skipper was introduced to readers in the first issue as a man who "dares go anywhere, do anything -- and he asks his questions afterward." Readers were assured that "there is no one with red blood in him who will not admire this fighting

Fury." The first entry in the Skipper series was titled THE RED HEART PEARLS and began with the Dent-style opening "Death pursued the man in the yellow slicker." The man in the yellow slicker, who was indeed pursued by death, brought word to Cap that his brother, Captain Tom Fury, had been killed. As with Doc in THE MAN OF BRONZE, Cap Fury hits the vengeance trail and the series is off.

Similarities between Doc and Cap turn up throughout the first and other adventures. Cap's basic physical appearance is very dissimilar from Doc's; he has "flaming red hair" and was "stocky" or "chunky". But his eyes were "sharp arctic blue" and "denoted him as a man of action." The Skipper's eyes were often interjected into the story and were always a major portion of his description; they were "as cold as bits of Arctic ice" and went well with his "icy voice." Donovan had picked up many ideas and gimmicks while writing Doc stories and these turn up constantly in the pages of THE SKIPPER. Like Doc, Cap has the abilities to fix faces in his mind, lip read, and move "like the lithe action of a jungle cat." Cap uses the familiar nerve centers in the neck to put an enemy to sleep - "One of Cap's square-ended thumbs pushed suddenly into the chords of the native's neck. The headman ceased speaking instantly, and his eyes closed. He sagged as inertly as if he were dead." Gadgets also made their appearance in the stories but they are not as clever or as interesting as the devices utilized by Doc. Cap's gadgets include oxygen masks and hypodermics stored in his great sea boots, which the reader quickly recognizes as Doc's old utility vest in disguise. Disguises are another feature borrowed from the Man of Bronze. The Skipper disguises himself with wigs, eye shells, and other devices numerous times during the course of this series. Like Doc, Fury inserts himself

into dangerous situations in order to draw out the enemy, he often works alone so as to protect his aides from danger, and "seldom took others into his confidence" concerning the solution to various mysterious happenings until all of his theories were proven and the crooks were rounded up or exterminated.

And here is where Cap Fury and Doc Savage code was noble, humanitarian, and moralistic, Cap Fury's code was harsh and filled with a desire for vengeance. In the first story after Cap has found the remains of his dead brother the following scene occurs: "Standing there...looking at the white bones of his brother, Captain John Fury uttered a vow. 'Whenever and wherever I come upon these men, or others of their kind, they shall suffer ten times for every broken finger of my brother.'" Cap was a man of his word. Cap and his men executed cruel and brutal justice. The Skipper, while more restrained than his aides and crew members, was not adverse to dealing in death and torture. His automatic pistol is used to kill - "Cap's automatic snapped once..the one who had shot the police guard, twisted on his heels and sat down in a queer position.





SPIKE BRIGGS

Over his right eye appeared a round, blue hole." To make captives talk he would use his own effective truth serum - "the old whipping post." The old whipping post "looked like an old wooden cross. It was a great, clumsy affair of teakwood. This wood was so old it was pitted...There were only two parts of iron. There were wrist manacles stapled into the horizontal arm of the cross." When about to use the whipping post in BREATHLESS ISLAND Fury comments that criminals "are coddled too much by the shore law. They need some of the salt of the sea." In spite of striking similarities between Doc Savage and the Skipper the differences make all the difference. The Fighting Fury is indeed a "fighting fool" as the magazine's editors once described him and the character is never able to transcend his violent nature and develop in any other way. The reader knows Cap Fury only as a "two fisted" crime-fighter of the seas and nothing more. Action is all the holds the stories together. Plot, story, mood, and characterization are sacrificed to fast paced violent action and if the character of the Skipper is poorly developed the characters of his aides and crew members are almost nonexistent.

Cap's aides play a minor role in the series in comparison to such series as DOC SAVAGE and THE AVENGER making a full comparison impossible.

While the Skipper's associates are in many cases variations on different Doc aides and predecessors of certain members of the Avenger's team, these characters in most cases are not central to the story and like Cap Fury, remain undeveloped.

The only close associate of the Skipper who is not a sailor or crew member is Peter Doom. Doom is described in the first issue as "A policeman who made it so tough for crooks, the politicians got him out. Now he is on his own, and he's still a terror to the underworld." he does not remain "on his own" for long for soon he is teamed up with the Fighting Fury in a war against crime. In Doom can be found elements of Johnny



MARA—the Black Leopard Princess

and Renny and a possible foreshadowing of Fergus MacMurdie; he is "a fellow so tall and thin, it looked as if he might break in two. He was wearing a long black coat, and a black hat with a round crown and brim. This gave him the appearance of an undertaker." Doom's description is also similar to Donovan's Whisperer; no coincidence since he was writing both series at the same time. Peter Doom used two big revolvers, referred to as "Police Positive", was possessed of a "funeral

countenance", had "solid black eyes", and was "given to bursts of temper". His favorite expressions revolved around the various colors of hell such as "By all the blue-green hells!", "By all the purple hells!", "By all the green-blue hells!", and on and on without much imagination. He is tough, honest, and believes in the Skipper's brand of justice and the two are drawn together in the course of the first adventure. However, before this match is made the two men meet one another in a toe to toe fist fight which gives each a healthy respect for the other's abilities. As a character Doom is one of the most important of Cap's small band of aides but, like the magazine itself, lacks duende or charisma. He is as colorless as his clothes - a statement which certainly does not apply to the other major Skipper aide, Spike Briggs.

James Jonathan "Marlin Spike" Briggs, the Monkish character in the Skipper's crew, is just as one dimensional as the others- however, that one dimension is flamboyant and colorful. Spike is the Skipper's tough first mate whose "countenance had been carved from time to time in many ports, with everything from knives to broken bottles." His expository remarks have a bit more variety than do Peter Doom's but two of his favorite are "Sweet Davy Jones!" and "By the great hornspoon!" - one of his most imaginative exclamations in the entire series was the memorable "Well, I'll be the spawn of a jellyfish!" Spike is a full participant in the violent action of these stories and, like Monk, often tends to overdo and become carried away in his murderous zeal. Doom and Spike are the two major supporting characters but the series is cluttered with numerous other minor figures even less important to the magazine's adventures.

Hurricane Dan Belmont, the second mate, is a "giant" with "thick black hair from his head to his

waist" (shades of Smitty and Monk) whose favorite expression seems to be "Holy mackerel!" Third mate Cock-eye is hardly more than a name. James "Bumps" McCarthy is "a roly-poly, red-haired young man". He was "known as 'Bumps' because of his constantly getting himself into jams". He was the "ace cameraman of Super-World News Films" and followed the Skipper for news reel footage and excitement. The owners of Cap's ship were represented by Chairman of the Board G.R.M. "Grump" Rollins. This "strange old man" figures into several of the stories in a minor role and has a "face that was a whole series of bulges. His jaws bulged under his ears, when he was mad, which was three-fourths of the time, his eyes bulged and threatened to pop out." The cast of characters is almost completed with the numerous but usually nameless crew members. They are a tough group of fighting men and excellent sailors with, as one visitor comments, "the hardest faces" he had ever seen. In spite of their excellent sailing and fighting abilities it emerges in one story that "it was notorious among most of the sailors that they could not swim".

An interesting character in the series is Princess Mara, Mara von Jean, the Black Leopard Princess of the Indo-China jungle. Introduced in THE BLACK LEOPARD PRINCESS (Jan. 1937) Mara is the Pat Savage of the Skipper series. She had been rescued during the course of her first adventure by Cap and his crew and brought back to the United States where she was adopted by Grump Rollins. While she was supposed to be in a girls' school near Boston in reality, like Pat, she preferred excitement and Cap Fury meant excitement. She was blond with a beautiful figure and "skin of golden, coppery hue". She is a female Tarzan, an odd coincidence since John Nanovic's nickname for Pat was Tarzana. In any event, she completes the cast of characters which fill the pages of THE SKIPPER

magazine. All are shades of variations of Doc and his aides as is floating Eighty-Sixth Floor, the WHIRLWIND.

Cap's ship is the WHIRLWIND and while the ship appears to be a shabby, run-down, "rusty sided tanker" it is in fact an extraordinary fighting machine. Its disguise as a "tramp tanker" conceals a superpowered ship which can move a speeds of nearly one hundred miles an hour and is equipped with numerous weapons, gadgets, and comfortable living quarters. The wheelhouse is armor plated. Weapons include various types of guns, grapplers, and "dockage space in the lowest hold, where amphibian planes of extraordinary design, with folded wings, lay beside other smaller craft and a cigar-shaped vessel that could be no other than a small submarine". This remarkable vessel continues to surprise the villains each adventure even though one would think that they would catch on to the Skipper's secret. Living quarters and other facilities are elaborately furnished with oriental rugs and other items which "had been gathered from a hundred foreign ports. Carved Chinese chairs and tables comprised the chief luxury equipment of the room". Cap Fury and his men lived well and worked in luxury. In many respects the WHIRLWIND harbors beneath her rusty decks Doc's eighty-sixth floor headquarters. Donovan had picked up a great many ideas while writing the adventures of Doc Savage. Unfortunately all he learned was the gimmicks; he never mastered Dent's style of abilities to weave a good story.

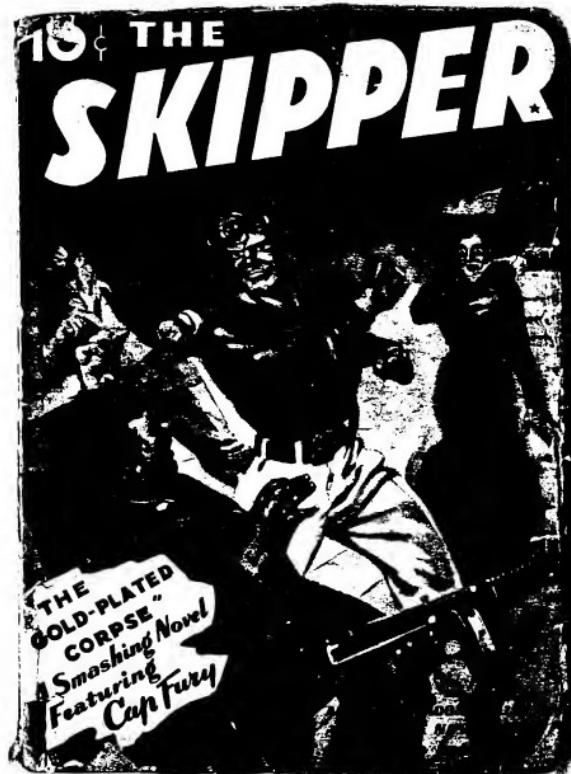
The Skipper stories are often good fun but rarely exciting or capable of fully capturing the reader's imagination. The stories are not well developed or even well written mystery-adventures. Neither does the action and adventure of the novels grip the reader. When the stories do manage to break away from the mundane they escape to the bizarre, where Laurence Donovan worked well. Donovan's Doc stories are among the most fantastic of the series, heavily oriented toward the science-fiction genre. That his imagination sometimes got the best of him appears obvious from an anecdote related by Walter Gibson. Gibson recalls overhearing Donovan outline a Skipper plot to editor Nanovic which involved a criminal who manufactured fake icebergs in order to wreck ships. A seaplane would settle in the ocean ahead of a ship, manufacture the iceberg and take off, leaving the ship to collide with the newly developed berg. This absurd idea of generating an iceberg in salt water was given a horse laugh by Nanovic and is a good example of Donovan's creative ability. Unable to depend on characterization and exciting prose, he attempted to attract the reader's attention through the use of the unusual and the bizarre- giant man-eating class, huge turtles, and sadistic sexual situations.

The sexual content of the Skipper novels is of the nature typical of the "Spicy" titles of pulp fiction. Evil villains leer and threaten half naked young women. Often these helpless females are trapped in bizarre situations such as in BREATHLESS ISLAND when the soft young Tarna Rodens is tied to a giant turtle slowly moving out into a barracuda-filled island lagoon. Throughout this ordeal Donovan comments on the girl in a tantalizing fashion: "every revealed curve of her lithe body", "beautiful legs", "slim legs", and "the white body of the



girl" are the types of suggestive images used by the author in a pre-popular porno day. In THE CLIPPER MENACE the villain extorts ransom from his captives by having them watch the torture of a young girl in the following manner: "...he lifted the slender, doll-like figure of Marian Dawes. The girl was clad only in the thinnest of garments. Even her shoes and stockings had been removed...The thinly-clad body of the girl was laid across the cold, blue ice...Marian Dawes's slight, perfect-

ly formed body became convulsed with her frenzied effort to escape the stinging chill of the ice cake. That pretty figure contracted visibly on the cold, blue slab of ice. A hysterical scream quivered from the girl's throat." Illustrations of these scenes are often added to Donovan's "Spicy" prose emphasizing the fact that these situations were no accident but rather conscious editorial policy. Mara was the exception to the "helpless female" image of the Skipper pulps. Like her



DOC SAVAGE counter-part Pat, Mara was involved in the tough "two-fisted" action of the series. Unlike Pat, however, Mara's sensual sexuality is fully developed. Her adventures find her in torn dresses and her figure "recently clad" and even Mara must be rescued by the Skipper and the WHIRLWIND's fantastic crew. Mara is a more "adult" version of Pat Savage. A new approach for Street & Smith designed to capture a different reading audience; the publishers were apparently not pleased with the title for it lasted only twelve issues.

The magazine came to an end with the December 1937 issue. This story, THE GREEN PLAGUE, was to be the last time readers would experience the full force of the Fighting Fury and he remained a harshly violent Skipper throughout the final story. In the closing pages of this last novel Cap Fury is once again at the old whipping post in the following scene: "Judge Thatcher's fear-filled voice rang out. 'You will be hanged for this! You can't do this to me! No man can invoke the law of the dark ages!' His words were cut off by an icy, chilling laugh. That laugh came from the Skipper. The black whip writhed in the air. The forked lashes cut across the back of Judge Thatcher. The skin separated into great welts. Judge Thatcher screamed, for he was not a man of nerve. The whip swished again..." Captain John Fury and company had not changed during the course of the magazine's brief run and now it was too late for change. THE SKIPPER along with its companion Shadow variation THE WHISPERER were cancelled in a company purge of sorts and not necessarily due to poor sales. It was too bad. While not one of the great pulps THE SKIPPER had been fun and the idea of the pulp was a good one. Perhaps under the authorship of a more creative and innovative individual the stories might have developed a character of their own instead of remaining a

shallow variation of DOC SAVAGE. This was not to be however as the Skipper moved to a short feature in the back of DOC SAVAGE for the remainder of his pulp career. In the process two Skipper novels already written and submitted by Donovan became superfluous to the purposes of the series. These novels were THE MURDER MAKER and THE DIAMOND DEVIL. THE MURDER MAKER was revised and cut for MYSTERY (May 1941) where it appeared under the same title but with the name of Jack Storm attached to the story. THE DIAMOND DEVIL appeared in MYSTERY (July 1942) as THE DEVIL OF DIAMONDS under the pen-name Wallace Brooker, which had been attached to the Skipper series. In both cases all references to the Skipper were deleted before publication making them non-descript mystery-adventure stories at best. THE SKIPPER was no more.

While THE SKIPPER as a magazine had passed from the pulp scene, the Skipper as a character was alive in the pages of DOC SAVAGE. Editors announced in at least three places in the last issue of THE SKIPPER that the character would be moving into the pages of DOC SAVAGE. The news flash went as follows: "With this issue of THE SKIPPER we are discontinuing the present magazine and combining The Skipper novel and features with another Street & Smith publication- DOC SAVAGE...in combining THE SKIPPER with DOC SAVAGE, we are giving our readers much more for their money...The November issue of Doc Savage carries the first Skipper story in combination with the other features. Don't miss that issue!" Of course, the Skipper shorts included in the back pages of DOC SAVAGE could never be classified as novels by any stretch of the imagination. Many of the minor characters were dropped in the transition and the war is the dominate theme of these unimportant pieces of short fiction. If the Skipper novels had lacked any unique

and exciting characteristics, the bland nature of the shorts made the novels spell binding by comparison. Even the Skipper story in CRIME BUSTERS (September 1939) may have been an attempt at reviving the title, as was later done with THE WHISPERER. If so, it was not considered successful by the publishers and the Skipper continued as a short feature through the December 1943 issue of DOC SAVAGE.

Laurence Donovan continued with the Skipper character for about a year, submitting his last story, "Death's Pay-Off Man", in October 1938. Donovan's shorts are simply Skipper novels in miniature. Many of these stories take place in United States waterways - with some locations in the South Seas and South America - and the chief villains are a variety of crooks and pirates. Just like old times; the action is the story and the story is the action. Not all of Fury's men are present in the shorts but of the regular crew Hurricane Dan Belmont and Merlin Spike Briggs are most often featured. Peter Doon, Cap's right-hand man in the magazine series, wanders in and out of the stories with occasional appearances. Mara von Jean is present for the "Big Cypress Doom" and Donovan treats us to her final appearance in his final entry of the series, "Death's Pay-Off Man", which is also the last appearance of Grump Rollins. In the midst of this black of Donovan stories lies one tale by William Bogart. Bogart's "Quest of Death" is a minor entry which takes place in Alaska. The author had obviously read a Donovan novel where Cock-eye was mentioned, for the elusive third mate turns up in this short. The Bogart story was an exception to the rule however since Donovan had dominated the series since its inception. With the submission of Laurence Donovan's last story the series floundered a bit until hitting upon another author and a theme to temporarily sustain the sinking

Skipper.



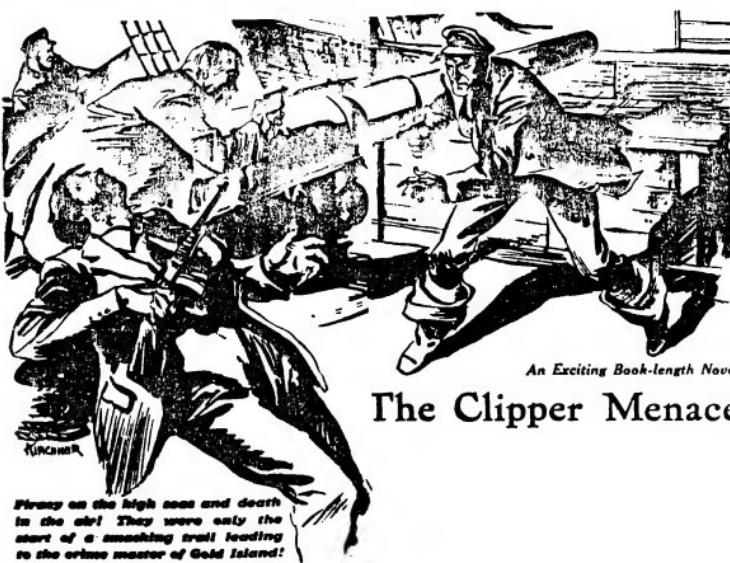
For a while the Wallace Brooker pen-name alternated between Harold A. Davis and Norman Daniels (Danberg). According to a letter to Lester Dent, Davis, who wrote four of the Skipper shorts, had made an arrangement to ghost Skipper novels for Donovan before the magazine's cancellation. Donovan's departure finally gave Davis his opportunity to work with the character but for some reason he did not stay with the series. These stories offer no exceptions to standard Skipper fare with Davis carrying on in the tradition established by Donovan and bringing to the shorts some of the gimmicks and flavor picked up from his Doc writings - a brief period of his career that paralleled his Skipper work. While Harold A. Davis's stint with Cap Fury was brief, the next Wallace Brooker would carry the series through to its conclusion.

Norman Daniels wrote twenty-four of the Skipper shorts; more than any other contributor to the series. Daniels submitted his first story in February of 1939, "The Sea Vulture". For the next year his contributions were broken up by entries from Harold A. Davis but with "Ghost of Neighbor Island" published in the May 1940 issue of DOC SAVAGE the series became his and he became the new Wallace Brooker. The war in Europe had begun

to creep into the stories as early as the Davis short "Submarine Strategy" (July 1939) but with Daniels this theme is picked up and comes to dominate Cap's final adventures. With "The Skipper Goes To War" Fury turns his full attention to the international conflict. Even the occasional appearances of Peter Doom are dropped and only Spike and Hurricane Dan accompany the Skipper on his wartime adventures. These stories are almost plotless engagements with the enemy. They have little connection with the former series except for the characters and the identity of the characters is of such little consequence that if the names were changed the stories would be indistinguishable from other patriotic wartime adventures that regularly appeared in pulp pages. Captain John Fury's career was winding down to an overdue finish. Cap's career had

really ended with the passing of THE SKIPPER magazine. Some of the blood and thunder from the magazine had carried over into Donovan's shorts but even this faded quickly. Daniels' "The Grim Pilot" (December 1943) marks the Skipper's last appearance.

The Skipper was gone. One of the first casualties of the war and the dying pulp era. If the character's passing was mourned by readers I am not aware of their concern. The Fighting Fury from the beginning had been only a variation of a more popular, more dynamic character. As a short feature, Cap's status was further reduced to the role of filler in that character's magazine. Finally, by the end of 1943, Cap Fury was obscured by the bronze shadow of his inspiration - Doc Savage.



ODD AND ENDS:

From the Pulpwoody Bookshelf
by
Link Hullar

Hello folks! Yes, it's me again with another variation on the "Pulpwoody" theme. The idea of this little column is to take a look at a variety of paperback fiction from the past. I have been reading paperback fiction for about twenty years now and without a doubt literally thousands of paperbacks have been devoured in this time period. Many of these were read and forgotten, read and given away, or read and swapped at second hand bookshops for other paperbacks. Some however were too good to part with and others had such strong memories for me that years later I ended up resurrecting a copy from some dingy book graveyard. Hopefully, this column will call your attention to some paperbacks that you were not aware of or had forgotten over the years. If at some point you are prompted to dust off a book from the back of a forgotten shelf, or if you pick up an extra paperback from your local book dungeon, or if maybe you just smile upon remembering the pleasure one of these titles gave you some years ago then the purpose of the column has been accomplished.

This time out I am going to look at a few Science Fiction/Fantasy paperbacks of a "few" years back, these are some good ones folks, I guarantee. First off is a book from 1970 published by Lancer (74707-075) for .75 cents, titled THE MIGHTY SWORDSMEN and edited by Hans Stefan Santesson. This is a fine introduction to sword and sorcery fantasy or if you are already familiar with this sub-genre of fantasy literature then it will be a terrific refresher course. There are six short stories in this book including adventures of Thongor, Conan, and Elric. "Keeper of the Emerald Flame" by Lin Carter, "The Bells of Shoredan" by Roger Zelazny, "Break the Doors of Hell" by

John Brunner, "The People of the Summit" by Bjorn Nyberg, "The Flame Bringers" by Michael Moorcock, and "Beyond the Black River" by Robert E. Howard, all of this is topped off by a marvelous Steranko cover. This collection will make any pulp fan a fantasy fan as well for these jewels capture the very best of heroic fiction.

Another collection of short stories from 1970 was published by Signet (T4327) at .75 cents as well. SWORDS AGAINST TOMORROW was edited by Robert Hoskins and please believe me Mr. Hoskins has assembled a fine collection of short stories in this volume. This book includes five short stories, among them are tales about old favorites such as Fafhrd the Grey Mouser, Kellory the Warlock, and Brak the Barberian. This is an excellent mixture of sword and sorcery fantasy and space opera Science Fiction. The stories are "Demon Journey" by Poul Anderson, "Bazaar of the Bizarre" by Fritz Lieber, "Vault of Silence" by Lin Carter, "Devila in the Walls" by John Jakes, and "Citadel of Lost Ships", by Leigh Brackett. The cover isn't much but the stories more than make up for this weakness.

Now pulp fans (did you think that I had forgotten our old pulps completely) how many of you remember Jongor? Yes, indeed I do see a few scattered hands out there. OK Bob you can put yours down, I know you wrote about Jongor in your book YESTERDAY'S FACES (Vol 2), but I've already reviewed you book elsewhere. According to Mr. Sampson these Jongor novels originally appeared in FANTASTIC ADVENTURE in 1940, 1944, and 1951 (and I'm not going to argue with Bob Sampson). These are wonderful fantasy novels in the Tarzan tradition only Jongor's world is much more "fantastic" in that there are strange animals and lost races who give our hero a tough time to be sure. The paperback versions of

these adventures were published by Popular Library at .60 cents each in 1970. All are by Robert Moore Williams and the titles are JONGOR OF LOST LAND (445-02498-060), THE RETURN OF JONGOR (445-02511-060), and JONGOR FIGHTS BACK (445-02540-060). All three books have outstanding covers by Frank Frazette which manage to capture the power and excitement of what waits for the reader inside these covers.

Well, that's enough for the first time around. If you would like this column to continue please write

to ye ole editor or to me (19803 Brentonridge Lane, Spring, Texas 77379). And PLEASE, if this is to continue I will need YOUR input; write to me and let me know about those paperbacks from your past that should be included in this column. All types of paperbacks will be considered - mystery, western, science fiction, fantasy, action, adventure, and many others. Let's here about YOUR favorites from years gone by. Time for me to wrap this up, take care, take it easy and write! Until later....



THE EYES HAVE IT
by
Dickson Thorpe

Foreword: While preparing the manuscript for my "Pulp Hero Scrapbook," one day I asked Pulpologist and author Robert Sampson this question: "If the heroes fell into a more or less predictable category, pattern, or mold, what about their female counterparts?"

Sampson replied: "The heroes even more closely fit a standard pattern. You could write something like this about the women: 'She was always strikingly beautiful, fragile, coolly lovely. Her smile was strangely filled with emotion. In her hand could either be a perfumed handkerchief, or a bucking .45 automatic because girls under all that softness and gentleness had a pretty good grasp on the advanced elements of judo. For the most part they were splendidly competent companions for the heroes, fit for standing up without as much as a waver to the month's load of crime and death.'

But what about the eyes?

Well, actually not a very great deal in some cases to be sure. But I thought why not go ahead and take a look at this particular organ of vision which one finds located in a cavity of the skull called the orbit? It is protected by an overhanging brow. It is one of the special sense organs (*organa sensum*), which are five in number--those of smell, sight, hearing, taste, and touch. Some have said the eyes are the windows of the human soul.

It is quite obvious most of the ladies that graced the pages of the pulp magazines of the Thirties and Forties had beautiful eyes. Here for the record are some of them:

BLUE EYES: (Which seemed to be the predominant color.)

Kay Fields, companion of Dan Dunn, Detective.

Doris Colquitt, who was associated with Jim Anthony.

Winnie Bligh, girl friend of reporter Rex Parker, the Masked Detective.

Christine Stuart, the lady involved with the Candid Camera Kid.

R-1, Registered Nurse and Intelligence Agent in G-8 and his Battle Aces.

Nan Christopher, sister of Operator #5. She possessed 'warmingly blue' eyes.

Sheena, Queen of the Jungle. She had blue eyes that 'blazed when she was angry.'

Nita Van Sloan, companion of Richard Wentworth, the Spider. Her eyes were 'a warm blue.'

Carol Baldwin, associate of Tony Quinn, the Black Bat.

Mary Parker, the girl who Captain Hazzard had to rescue. Her eyes were 'a dark blue.'

Sally Wagner, who knew the Man in the Red Mask. She had 'brilliant blue' orbs.

Sue Gordon, who knew the Angel. Her eyes were 'a deep blue.'

Mina Hastings, who also knew the Angel. Her eyes were said to be 'brilliant and dangerous.'

Sally Vane, Federal Bureau of Investigation, girl friend of Dan Fowler. She had 'smiling blue eyes.'

Senorita Scorpion, as featured in Action Stories.

Garcia, age seventeen or eighteen, who rode with the Western Raider.

Dallas Reade, companion of White Eagle. Her eyes were 'the color of deep water.'

Patricia Dean, secretary of Ascott Keane, who fought with Dr. Satan. She had 'dark blue eyes.'

Tiny Traeger, who nurses a secret devotion for Wild Cat Gordon, The Whisperer, is another of those with 'dancing blue eyes.'

Betty Dale, the woman who loved Secret Agent X.

Here are a few others:

Patricia Savage, cousin of Doc Savage. Her eyes were a 'golden hue.'

Merry White, who knew the Ghost. She had 'curious green eyes.'

Doro Kelly, newspaper reporter, a friend of Captain Zero. Her eyes 'changed from blue to green, depending on what she wore.'

Evelyn March, who was associated with Lynn Vickers of Public Enemy had 'violet eyes.'

Sonia Demitri, from Dr. Yen Sin. Her eyes were 'dark, mysterious looking.'

Visualize this scene if you will which followed an episode of violence or violent rescue, in the course of which members of the evil genius' henchmen got themselves dispatched. We see as the powder smoke coils blue in the still echoing air, Operator #5 draws Diane Elliot free of the white hot blade, holding her closer--or, perhaps, Richard Wentworth in one of his frantic leaps, pulls Nita Van Sloan's unconscious form from the very lips of a pit filled with foaming acid. Their eyes met. They smiled.

Or this brief scene from a RANCH ROMANCE story: The young Texas Ranger had returned after stalking three desperate men. She was waiting for him. He took her into his arms and said: "I can't keep my eyes off you with your blue dress matching your laughing eyes."

Now in this modern day and age do you suppose there is anybody--any woman who might give competition to our pulp heroines in the eye cate-

gory? I'll tell you something, I've found only two in the past few years. Let me tell you about them:

The first is usually seen on the CABLE NEWS NETWORK from New York City. Her name: Mary Alice Williams. She has eyes that literally 'sparkle with brilliant lights,' as did those of Diane Elliot. They are twin spheres of piercing gray that have a strange way of holding you like the tentacles of an octopus once you own gaze is upon them. You simply are helpless to turn away and look elsewhere. Watch her sometime and see what I mean.

The second you will probably never meet unless circumstances bring you to the First National Bank of East Mesa, Arizona. She is behind the counter, far right end, standing 5 foot and 3 and half inches tall, her thick glossy black hair touched by a few thin strands of barely visible gray. But it is the eyes of Lorraine Meade that captivate and unexpectedly take possession of whatever she focuses on at the moment. They remain strangely hypnotic, shimmering quietly, twin points of a blue-green shade. From them spring intensity and a deep luminosity that just never seems to fade away.

Both Mary Alice Williams and Lorraine Meade have eyes that sing like far bells chiming on a warm summer day. They need take no back seat to Nita Van Sloan or Evelyn March. We could even see Williams in the role of Patricia Savage, and Meade playing that of Doro Kelly. Such are the things we have read the pulp magazines over the years dream about. Indeed, the eyes have it!



MEET THE COLLECTOR

by

John P. Gunnison

Being only twenty nine years old, I cannot come close in matching the years of experience of many true pulp collectors out there. But I can honestly say, that there are not many who enjoy the pulps any more than I do. What started out by mistake when I was a child, has really blossomed into a year round obsession.

I was eleven years old when I first came across the Man of Bronze. His gleaming bronze skin and taut muscles rippled across the cover and teased me into picking it up and reading. It wasn't a Baumhofer cover that enticed me, but the artwork of James Bama and a Bantam reprint. The title, please forgive me, was either DEATH IN SILVER, or THE SECRET IN THE SKY, I can't remember which. But for the first time I read a real book, cover to cover, without being asked to by a teacher. (Now I am not counting the countless Dr. Suess books I read as a child) Doc Savage was a new type of reading for me. I had read comics before and even had amassed quite a collection at that time for a child of eleven, but Doc Savage was new. Here was a character that I could imagine in my mind, without having to see him on a cartoon panel.

After that first book, I made the two mile trip by foot to the local paper-back book store, I couldn't get enough of Doc Savage. In fact one summer afternoon, while reading only my second book, my mother happened to walk by and see what I was reading. She was astounded to see me holding in my hand a Doc Savage paperback. She told me that she used to read Doc back in the thirties. Could this be the same Doc Savage? I didn't know, so I quickly went to the front of the book and saw that indeed this came from a magazine published in 1934. My mother's amazement, and my search for pulps started at the same time. Now after eighteen years, over 800 pulps, I

still find myself searching. My mother, well she got over her amazement several minutes after leaving the room. The only amazement she still has is when she comes over to my house and sees that I am indeed still collecting.

In fact the pulps have greatly influenced my life. I began writing soon after reading Doc Savage. In fact I still come up with what I feel are great pulp characters and plots. But I can not put them into print, mostly because I am not a writer and secondly, no one would publish them. I guess that is one reason why I wanted to start this magazine, because I wanted to have something published. Luckily I decided to let you all out there do 99% of the writing and leave me the task of compiling and editing.

But as I look back and see what I've done and the things I value the most, they can almost be traced back to the pulps. The movies I've seen and I've seen thousands, (being a film major and student) some of my favorites are still pulp oriented. Star Wars, Raiders of the Lost Ark, Rear Window and others have either been patterned after pulp characters or from stories by pulp writers.

Believe it or not, I still got a big kick out of the movie starring Ron Ely, "Doc Savage, the Man of Bronze." I was only disappointed by being led to believe that the film was not going to be in high-camp style. At least that was what George Pal said. When I heard the strains of John Phillip Sousa over the credits I knew I was in for a couple of hours of pure camp. But after Doc reminded his aides of his creed, I settled in and was ready for what was to come.

Pulp collecting, we must have our heads examined for buying decaying magazines, but like the rest of you, I'm hooked, I'm hooked, I guess my brain has been cooked. May it never clear and may I never have to sell my pulps.



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d-100



b-100



b-101



b-102



b-103



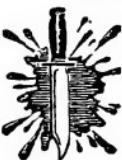
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